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Mrs. Doina Pana
Minister of Water and Forests
Government of Romania
Calea Plevnei 46-48, Sector 1
010233 București
Romania

Via E-mail to: cabinet.ministru@map.gov.ro

DBU funded project: "Virgin & Old Growth Forest in Romania – Safeguarding European Biodiversity Heritage"
Grant provided by the German Federal Environmental Foundation (DBU) to support the mapping of virgin and old growth forest in Romania

Dear Minister Mrs. Pana,

we would like to congratulate to your appointment as Minister of Water and Forests. Romania hosts a unique global natural heritage: the largest remains of primary and old growth forests in the EU. We wish you success with effective protection of these natural treasures and would like to express our willingness to support your conservation efforts as much as we can.

Therefore we are writing to you today to inform you about a project aiming to provide support to your strategies to protect primary forests in Romania. The project is titled "Old growth Forests in Romania. Safeguarding European Biodiversity Heritage" and it is financially supported by the German Federal Environmental Foundation (DBU). DBU is already long-time supporting projects in Romania related to environmental and educational issues. The project is a result of allied efforts of forest scientists in Rumania and in Germany to give support to recent governmental initiatives in Romania. Find for your interest the complete proposal / draft of project attached.

The coordination of this project is with the reputable University of Rottenburg / Hochschule für Forstwirtschaft in Rottenburg (HFR) / Germany / State of Baden-Württemberg. There is also close cooperation (technical and scientific ex-

change) with Romanian scientists including reputable researchers from Faculty of Silviculture at the Transilvanian University of Brasov.

The project's main objective is to contribute to the implementation of Romania's legal objectives for protection of primary forests (Forest Code, MO 3397 / 2012, MO 2525 / 2016). In particular the project wants to support the population of the National Catalogue of Virgin Forests as fast as possible in order to avoid further losses of unprotected important primary forest stands.

Romania hosts a forest heritage of invaluable international importance: the largest share of primary forest remains in the whole EU. Primary forests have disappeared largely from almost all European Member states. These ecosystems are highly important because of their rich biodiversity and they are significant carbon sinks.

Sustainable management of forests and strict protection of forests with high conservation value represent the actual priorities that results from the national forest strategy, Forest Code and from the international regulations ratified by Romania. Also, European legal frameworks such as the Habitat Directive and the Biodiversity Strategy require decisive action to establish conservation measures and avoid further deterioration of natural habitats and habitats of protected species. Therefore we consider it as a wider European responsibility to support preservation of primary nature such as "virgin" and "cvasivirgin" forests.

The Ministry of Waters and Forests has invited all the interested parts to collaborate/contribute and get involved in the process of identifying and elaborating of the background studies for protecting virgin and cvasivirgin forests. In order to provide practical support with Romanian conservation programmes HFR / DBU established partnerships with Romanian forest experts, who will prepare studies about potential primary forest remains for the National Catalogue of Virgin Forests.

Those experts will assess potential primary forest stands in accordance with the Romanian legal requirements. The work was launched in June 2017. The project will cover development of studies and submission to authorities and the Ministry for water and Forests in 2017 and 2018.

To increase the effectiveness of the work of the expert teams, especially when it comes to contacts to forest owners and local authorities, we kindly ask you for an official, written acknowledgement and endorsement of the project by your Ministry. Such a letter of endorsement would help to establish positive cooperation with both authorities and forest managers.

This letter should help the expert partners of the project to identify themselves as contributors to that DBU funded conservation programme, which in line with the national legislation of Romania and providing support to implementation of conservation requirements.

It would also be very much helpful, if your Ministry could officially inform Forest Guards and state forestry managers about the project and direct them to fully support the DBU-Project works for the development of the studies.

We would be very grateful if it would be possible to win your sympathy and support for our project!

We are happy to provide any further information about the project and to advance the dialogue about details of collaboration.

Yours sincerely,

Prof. Dr. Rainer Luick
Matthias Schickhofer
Dr. Iovu Adrian Biris
Prof. Dr. Lucian Curtu